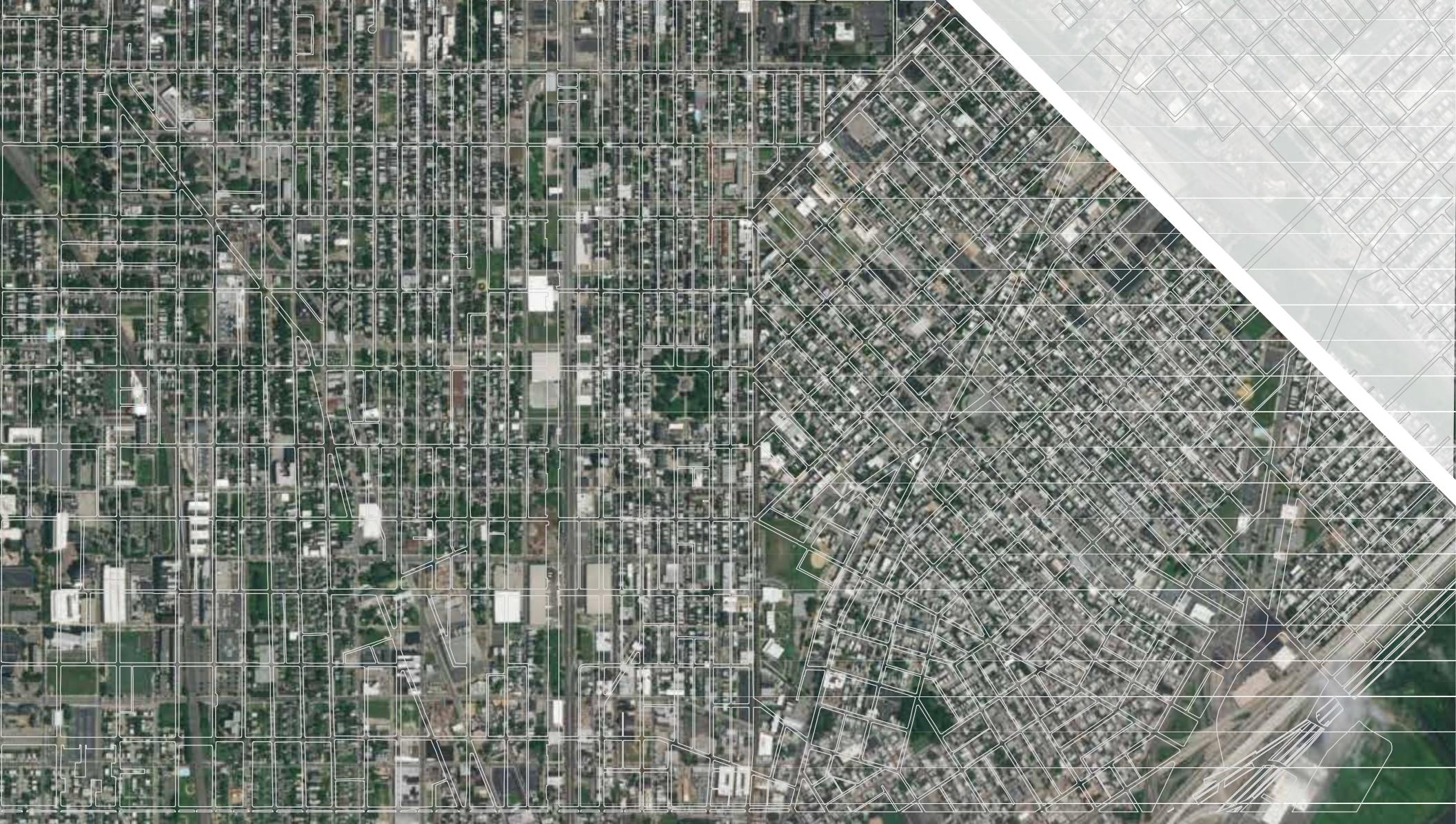


Philadelphia, East Leigh Corridor 2035



CPLN-600 WORKSHOP

During the Spring of 2020, this corridor plan was developed as part of the Master of City Planning Workshop course at the University of Pennsylvania School of Design. Our group undertook a comprehensive planning exercise for Lehigh Avenue East located in North Philadelphia.

We'd like to give special thanks to our instructor, Nathaniel Echeverria, for his guidance and support through this endeavor.

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CONTENT

INTRODUCTION

06-09

EXISTING CONDITIONS

08-45

ISSUES & OPPOTUNITIES

48-51

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

54-55

VISION

58-59

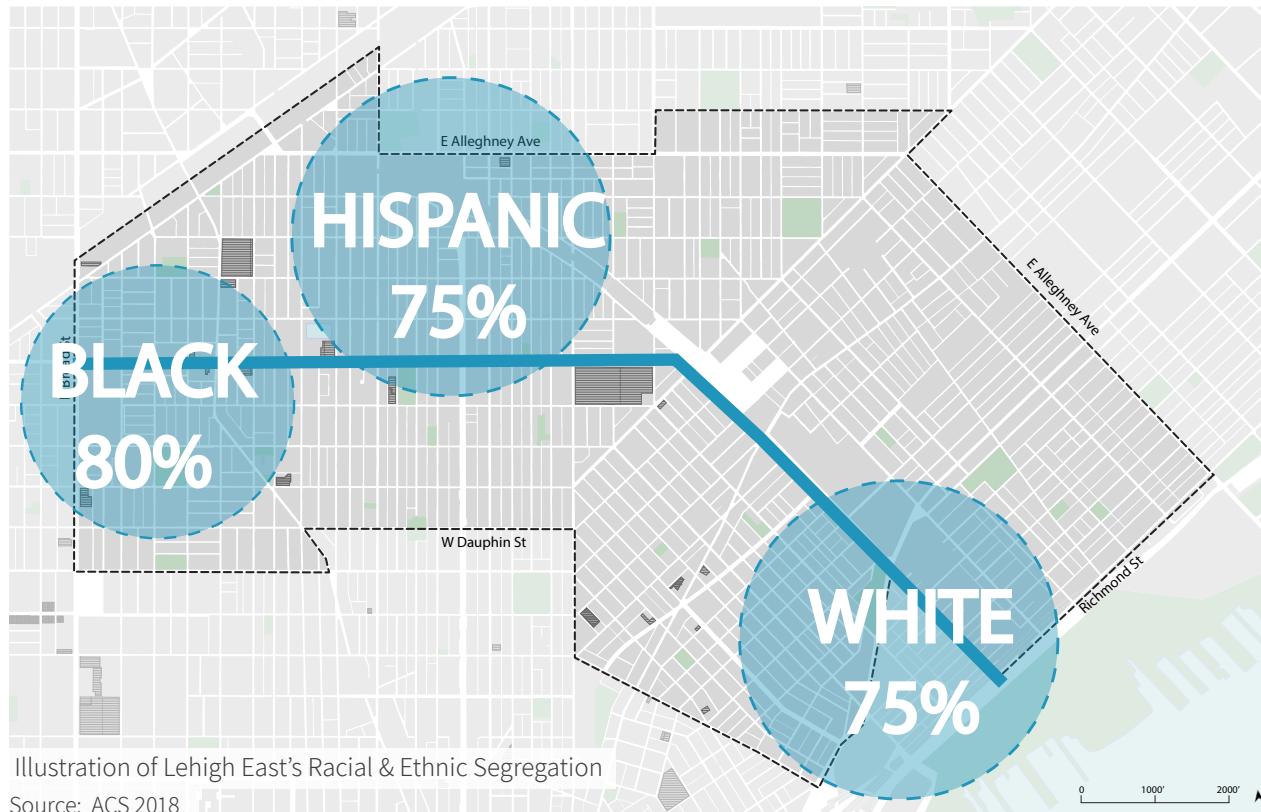
RECOMMENDATIONS&
IMPLEMENTATIONS&

62-95

APPENDIX

98-99

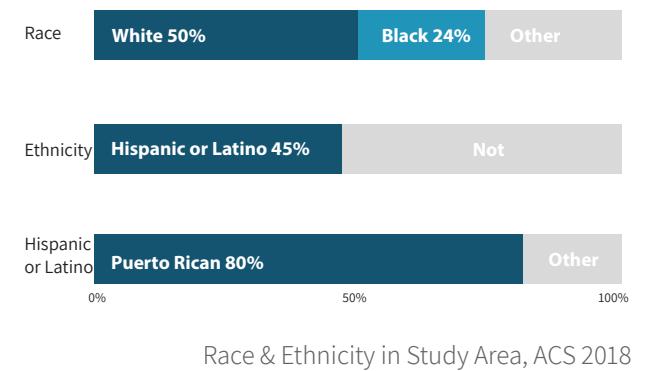
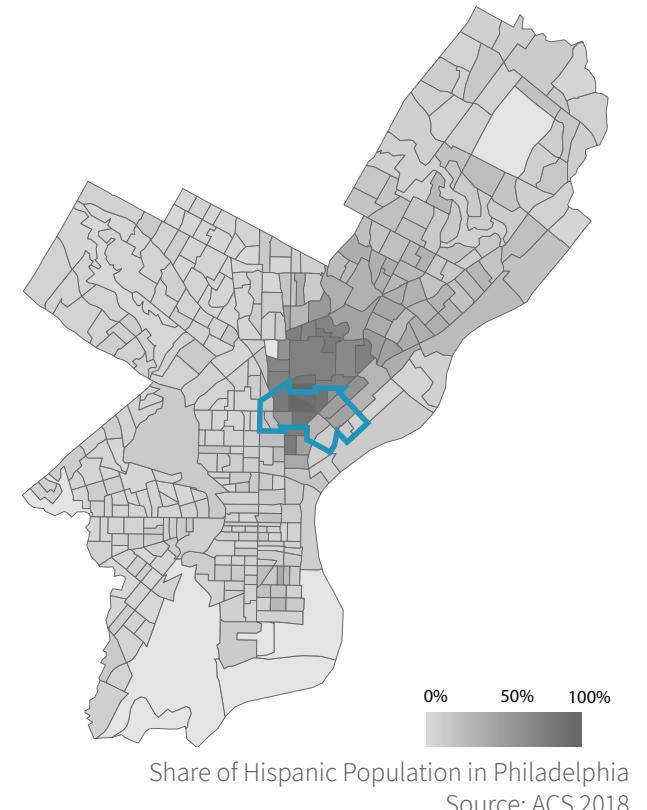
SOURCES



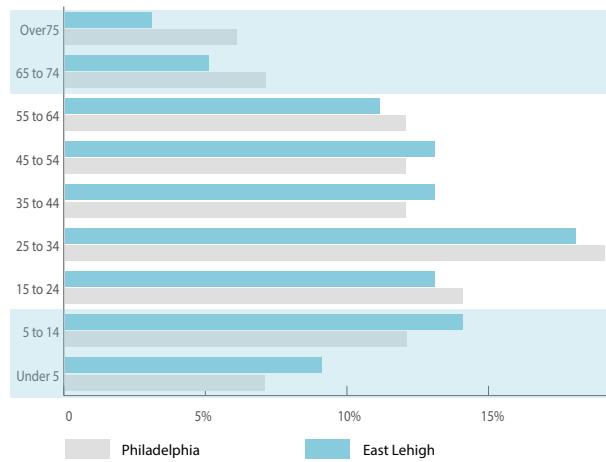
Diverse but Racially and Ethnically Segregated

Historically, almost all Lehigh East residents have been white. Beginning in the 1950s black and Hispanic residents started to move into the area and clustered around Broad St and East Allegheny Avenue. Currently, half of the residents are white and a quarter are black. As for ethnicity, around 45% of residents are Hispanic and more than 80% of this group are Puerto Rican. One of the neighborhoods, Fairhill, has the highest concentration of Puerto Ricans in the United States outside of Puerto Rico.

There are three main racial/ethnic clusters within the site which show high concentrations of certain racial or ethnical groups. Although the full Lehigh East corridor is diverse racially and ethnically, these groups are clustered in different places and interaction among the groups is limited.



High Share of Youth Population



Lehigh East has a relatively young population compared with the city. The median age is only about 32 years which is lower than the city median of 34.3 years. The high share of youth population (around 20% higher than city level) and a relatively low share of elderly population (30% lower than city level) suggest a certain youthfulness as characteristic of the surrounding neighborhoods. Therefore, it's important to guarantee that the number and quality of educational institutions and public facilities for children are sufficient to meet the local needs. Current age distribution implies that after 30 years the senior population is likely to catch up to the city level which will pose certain challenges for the future from a planning perspective.

Unemployment & Poverty

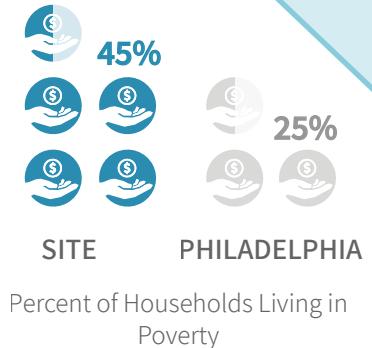
As for employment, the corridor's unemployment rate is 70% higher than Philadelphia. One reason is that there is a limited number of available job opportunities in the site. Although unemployment has been declining in recent years, it is still a major concern of the area.

The median household income of Lehigh East has lagged behind Philadelphia's for two decades and is likely to continue into the future if there is no further intervention. What's more, currently around 45% of households are living in poverty. This suggests that most of workers are engaging in low-paying jobs and it is relatively difficult for them to afford their daily expenditures.

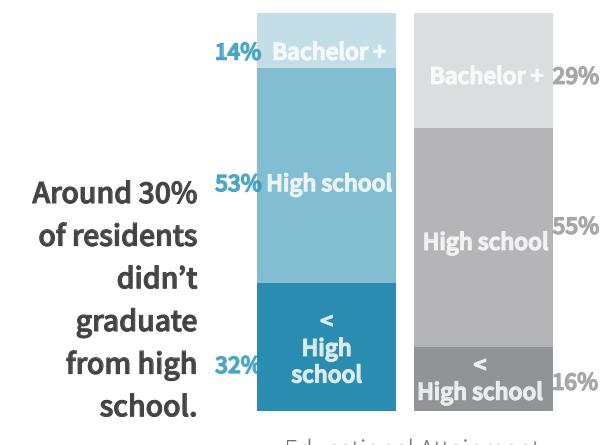
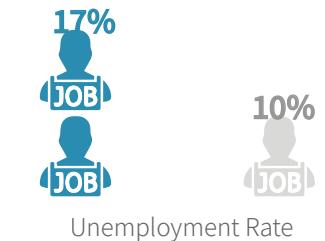
Low Educational Attainment

Low educational attainment prevents local economic advancement. In 2018, more than 30% of residents over 25 years old have not completed high school and the share of those with a Bachelor or higher is much lower than the city average. Children's educational opportunities and quality is also limited compared with other areas in Philadelphia. Philadelphia School District data shows that all the 8 elementary schools within the site were evaluated and classified as the bottom two tiers Watch and Intervene.

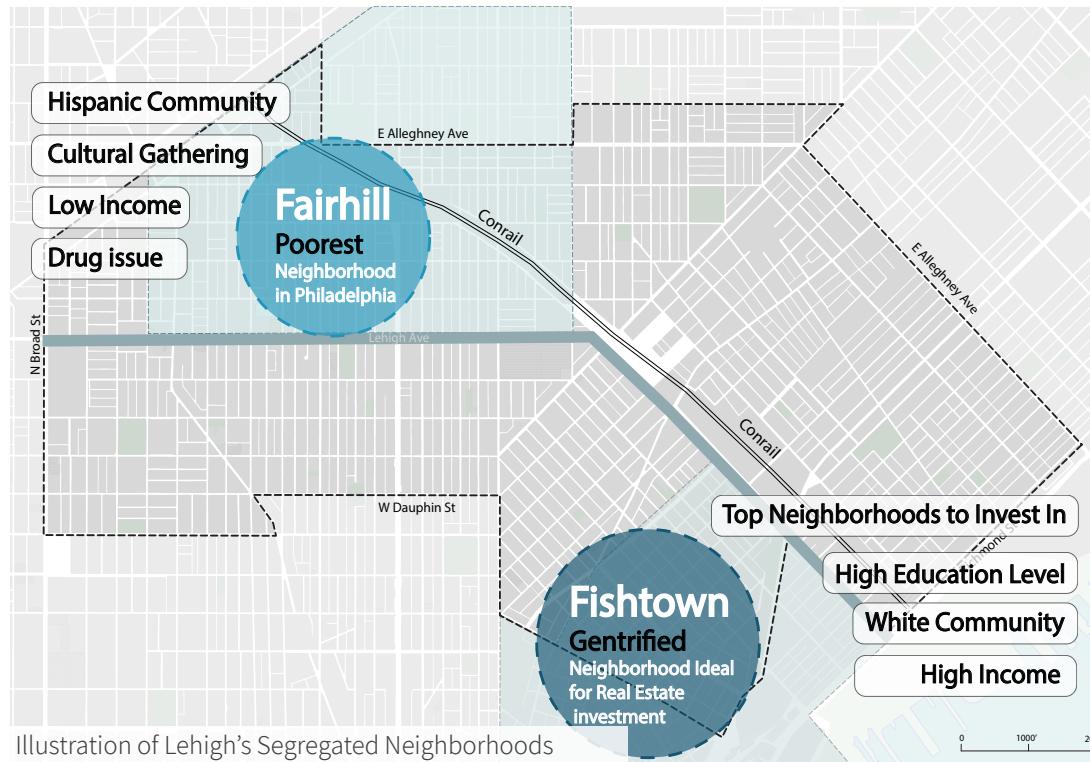
Around half of residents live in poverty.



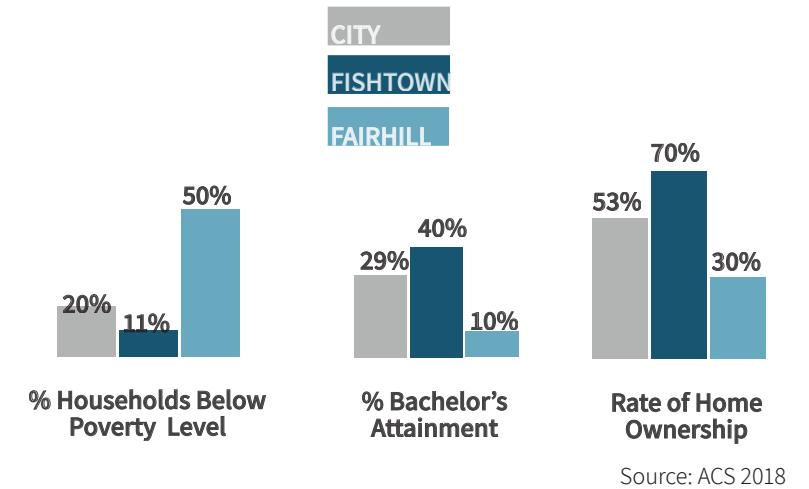
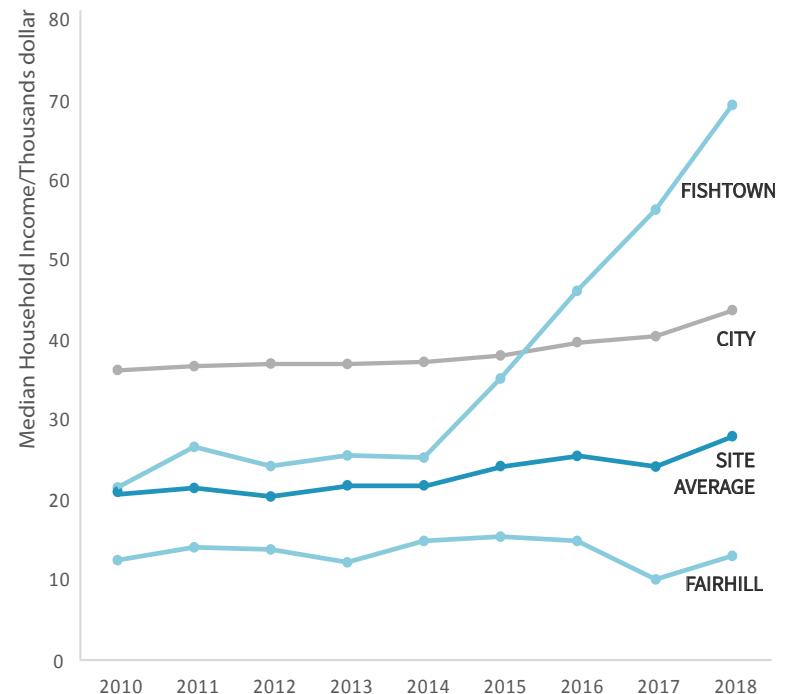
Unemployment is 70% higher than the city average.



Source: ACS 2018



Median Household Income Comparison



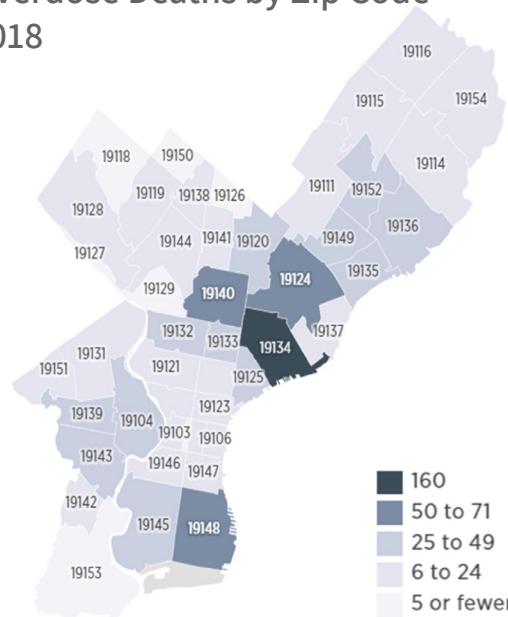
Socioeconomic Gap

Great disparities exist across this site. Lehigh East is adjacent to the poorest neighborhood in the Philadelphia, Fairhill, as well as the gentrified neighborhood of Fishtown, popular among artists, musicians, and young professionals. The contrasts in employment, education, income, home ownership and racial structure between the two neighborhoods is significant, with Fairhill being more economically disadvantaged than Fishtown.

Opioid Epidemic

The study area is deeply affected by the opioid crisis. The vacant Conrail viaduct, which runs north of Lehigh, was the site of an open-air drug market and homeless encampments where about 700 people lived.¹ The 19134 zip code routinely experiences the highest number of fatal overdoses in Philadelphia, with 160 in 2018 and 209 in 2017.² Mayor Jim Kenney began an emergency initiative called the Resilience Project in the summer of 2018 to address the opioid epidemic in Kensington, which included clearing the Conrail encampments in a humane way. Philadelphia may have approached the crest of this epidemic, as overdoses went down citywide by 8% in 2018.³ However, this site continues to experience a high amount of public drug use and fatal overdoses.

Overdose Deaths by Zip Code 2018



Map: John Duchneskie / Philadelphia Inquirer⁷



59% of death's among Philadelphia's homeless are due to overdose⁴



703 people lived in the public realm in Kensington in 2018⁵



overdose deaths in 19134 dropped by 23% in 2018⁶



Lehigh Avenue East is diverse but is also segregated by race and class

Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION C

Economic Prosperity

Economic Prosperity

The Lehigh East is a corridor of unbalanced economic resources, high rates of unemployment relatively low educational levels but with strong and resourceful CDCs, and a number of vacant (available) buildings and factories.



The following concerns are the angles by which this recommendation was considered. Strategies were selected to answer these questions: how to balance economic resources? (Strategy 1) How to attract and encourage firms to relocate to Lehigh East? (Strategy 2) How to cultivate local residents prepared for the new opportunities? (Strategy 3) Which organization should play the main role?



Creating more accessible job opportunities, preparing more residents for these opportunities, and attracting diverse firms are the fundamental methods by which economic prosperity will be achieved for Lehigh East as a whole. The goal of this recommendation is not only about job provision but also to achieve an economic restructuring. However, such a goal will be a lengthy process and needs to be implemented step by step; thus, we split it into three main strategies and several implementation steps.



STRATEGIES & IMPLEMENTATION

C.1. Economic Partnership

- Enhance collaboration between CDCs to set up a shared funding for unity development
- Work with PIDC to develop Industrial and commercial real estate
- Build partnership with Temple University

TIMELINE ●○○ 1 to 2 Years

Potential Leader: NKCDC HACE

C.2. Repurpose industrial buildings & Vacant lands

- Create an “opportunity area” website
- Focus more on attracting light industry
- Shift the focus to restructure the industry and appeal more creative firms in the future

TIMELINE ●●● 3 to 15 Years

Potential Leader: PIDC

C.3 Develop workforce training Program

- CDCs collaborate with anchor institutions.
- Training program for economically and educationally disadvantaged adults
- Provide instruction for career development.

TIMELINE ●●● 5 to 15 Years

Potential Leader: NKCDC

PARTNERS

City / State

- PIDC Philadelphia
- Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority
- Uptown Improvement Corporation
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry
- Philly Parking Authority
- Philly Dep’t of Commerce

Local

- HACE
- NKCDC
- ORCA
- DWRC
- Taller Puertorriqueno
- Village of Arts and Humanities
- Portside Art Center
- Temple University Hospital

FUNDING

- TIGER Grants, Philly Streets Dep’t, PA
- Vision Zero Program, Philly Water Dep’t ,
- SEPTA, HACE, Philly Parking Authority, DWRC,
- American St. Empowerment Zone Funding,
- Philly Dep’t of Commerce

OBJECTIVES

Connectivity

- Increase Collaboration
- Improve connectivity
- Network of Infrastructures

Vitality

- Increase Jobs
- Cohesive Public Realm
- A Quality Public Realm
- Affordable Housing

Safety & Health

- Zero Pedestrian Fatalities
- Mitigate drug impacts
- Decrease env. health

CATALYTIC PROJECTS

- Phase I: Redevelop cousin’s grocery store
- Phase II: Renovate vacant factory at American&Lehigh intersection

STRATEGY C.1.

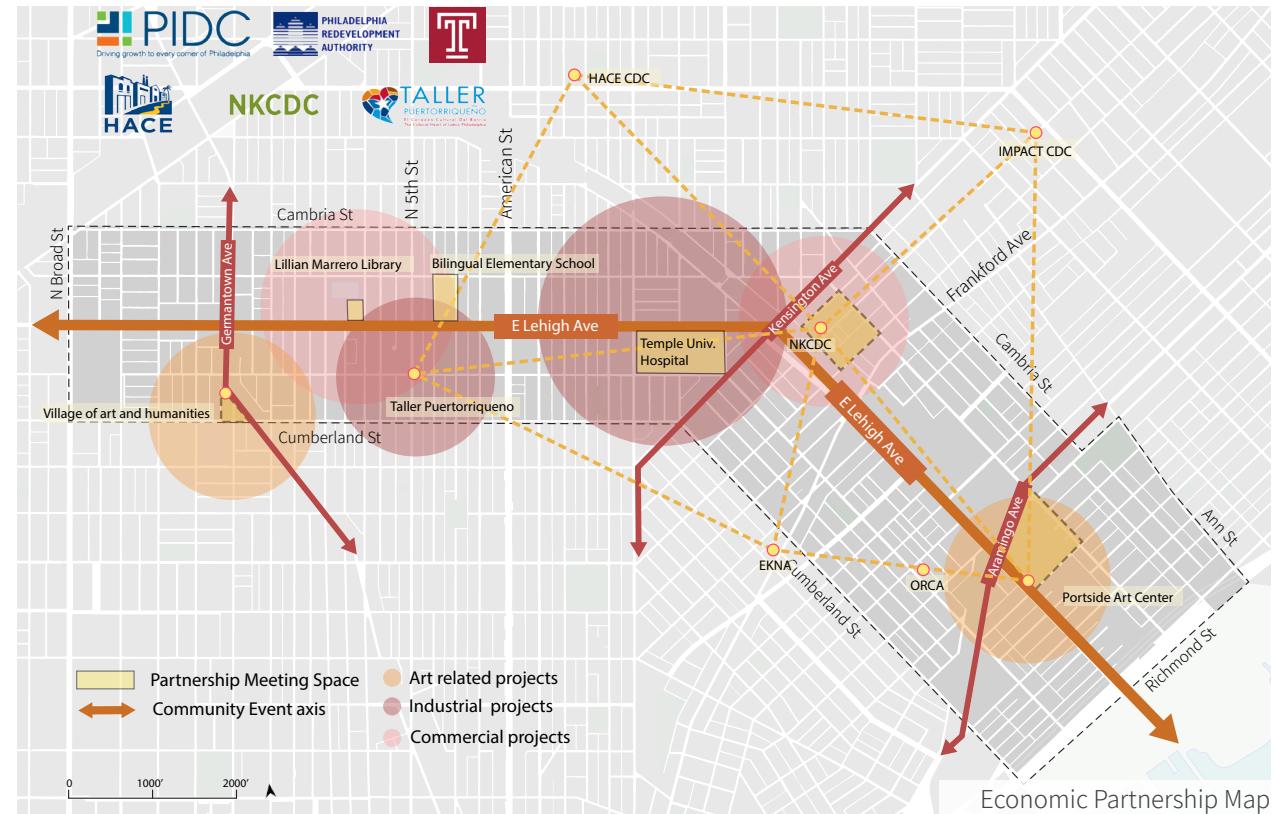
Economic Development Partnership

Lehigh East is not the economic powerhouse it once was. Creating a economic development partnership between CDCs and anchor institutions - especially Temple University - to integrate resources, reduce overlap, and to collectively advocate will create an entity better than the sum of its parts. This organization can collectively work to return the area to economic success. This type of organization will be better suited to work with PIDC on strategic real estate and business development for the full corridor. The partnership will also create events along corridors and provide services for businesses to locate or expand in the area.

Partners: Major CDCs

Financing: Neighborhood Assistance Program

Timeline: ●○○ 1 to 2 Years



Case Study: The Central Baltimore Partnership is a lattice of neighborhood groups, associations, community-based nonprofits, businesses, public agencies, and institutions including the Johns Hopkins University, the Maryland Institute College of Art, and the University of Baltimore. It facilitates redevelopment such as of Baltimore's Penn Station, incentivizes small businesses to locate in the area, and develops community programs.



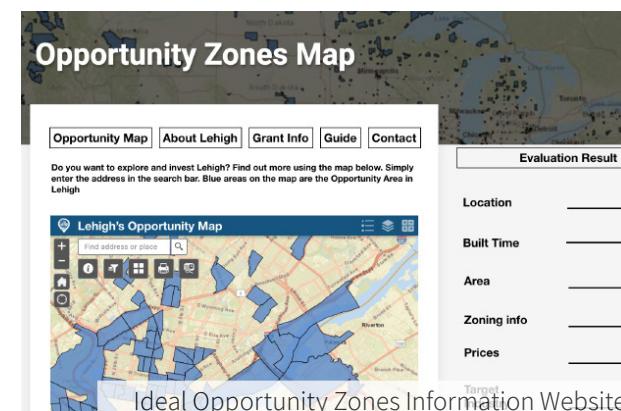
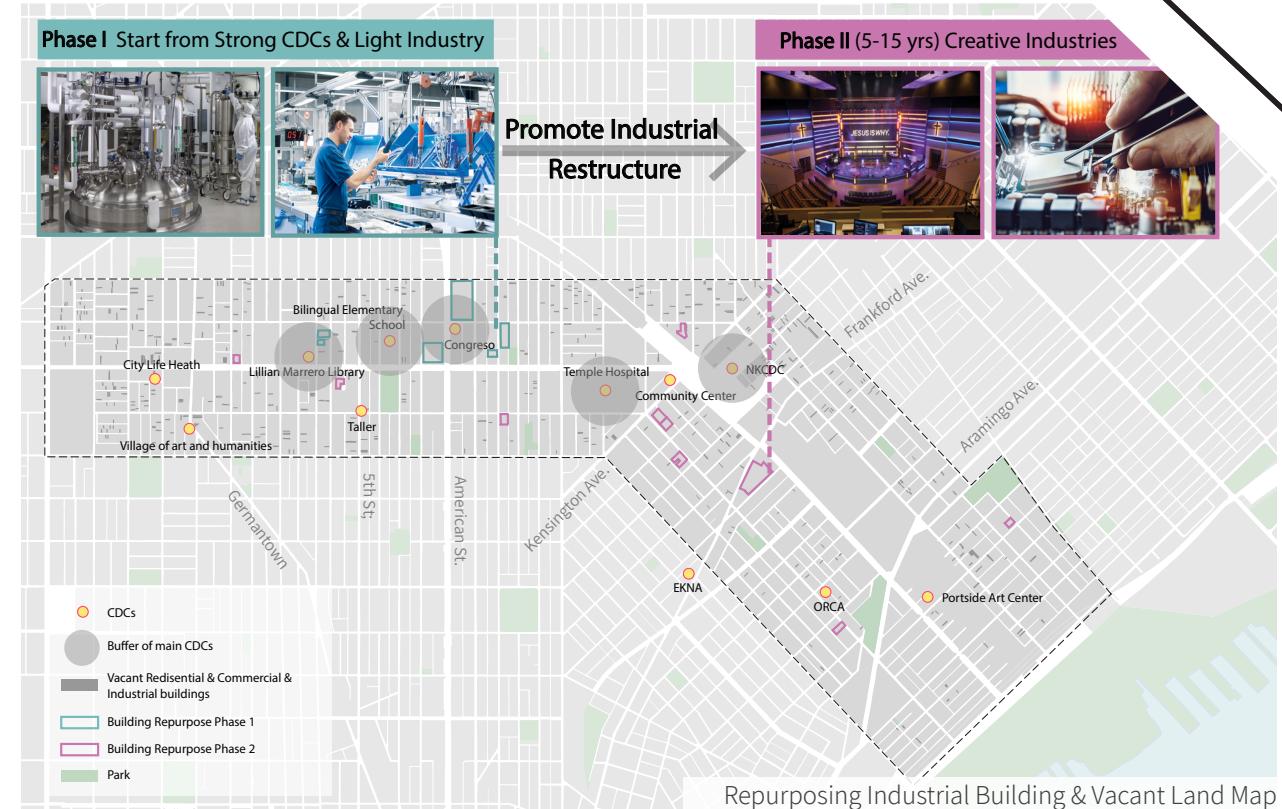
STRATEGY C.2.

Repurposing Industrial Buildings & Vacant Land

About 40% of the property in the site are vacant; many of which are large industrial sites. This strategy intends to brand these empty buildings as Lehigh East's "opportunity areas" to attract new firms and job opportunities to Lehigh. These areas will overlap with "opportunity zones". Zoning bonuses and employee tax credits along with the corridor's marketing will work to attract new firms. The target should be light industries and entry-level job opportunities in short term and gradually transform to other industries to guide the industry restructuring of the whole area.

Partner: Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority
Financing: Job Creation Tax Credit

Timeline: ● ● ● 10-15 Years



STRATEGY C.3.

Workforce Development

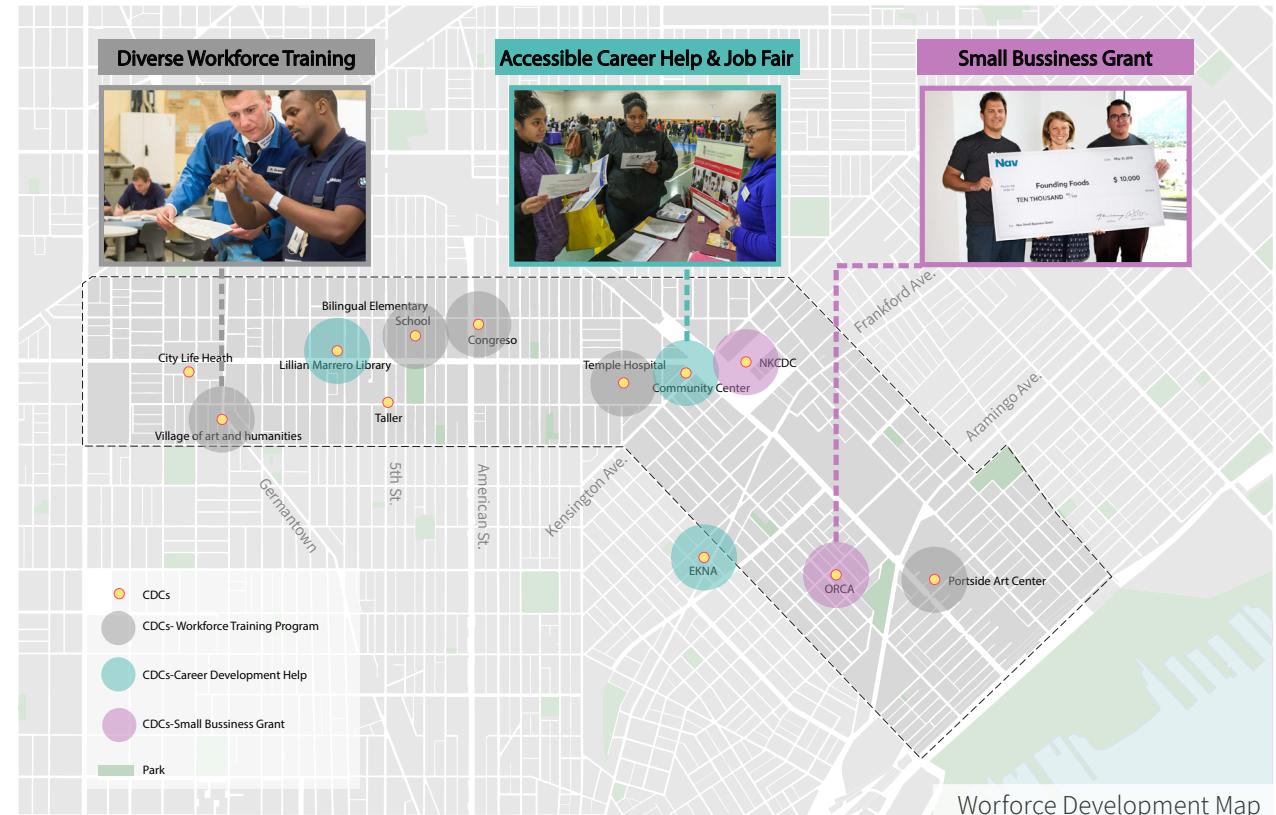
Lehigh East's employment rate and the general education level is lower than the city level. In addition to attracting new firms, it's also important to get more Lehigh residents ready to work with marketable skills, especially for economically isolated and inadequately educated groups. Although some CDCs have training programs, they can be strengthened and diversified.

Collaboration and partnership amongst the CDCs and anchor institutions, e.g. like Temple University Hospital and Lillian Marrero Library, will help do this. Career development, job fairs small business grants and more will be provided to provide to local residents to find a suitable job and develop a robust career path.

Partners: CDCs

Financing: Pennsylvania Department of Labour & Industry

Timeline: ● ● ● 10 to 15 Years



Case Study: Temple University

The Health Careers Opportunity Program provided by Temple University is a three-year project funded by the U.S. Dep. of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration. The program targets economically and educationally disadvantaged adults, aims to help them get into the community health professions by university's strength and resources.



Temple Hospital's Health Careers Opportunity Program

CATALYTIC PROJECT American & Lehigh

The recommendation selects two potential buildings to renovate.

Cousin's Market

- Redevelop the vacant building into a new food court to serve the surrounding neighborhood and become a tourist destination in this area
- Create leisure plaza outside the food court

Vacant Factory

- With the help of Temple University Hospital to renovate the vacant factory and develop it as a hi-tech medical lab.
- Partner with Congreso's healthcare workforce development

Partners: Temple University, Private Developer

Financing: Temple Capital Budget

● ○ ○ 1 to 5 Years

Timeline:



Demonstration of the Catalytic Projects along American & Lehigh Ave.

